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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: AUGUST 8, 2005 (1800 HOURS LOCAL) --
TWO PALESTINIANS, TWO ISRAELI SETTLERS SHOT IN WEST BANK
VIOLENCE; NETANYAHU RESIGNS TO PROTEST GAZA PULLOUT

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The IDF shot and injured two Palestinians in Tulkarm August 6 during an incursion into the city, according to Palestinian security sources. Two Israeli settlers, including a 10-year-old boy, were shot and injured by Palestinian gunmen near Ateret settlement, north of Ramallah, according to Israeli newspapers. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades took responsibility for the attack. In Gaza, three UNRWA workers were kidnapped and released by militants in Khan Yunis, UNRWA reported one Palestinian fatality, militants targeted IDF soldiers in a number of shooting attacks, and up to 4,000 Hamas supporters demonstrated over the weekend. Finance Minister Netanyahu resigned from the Israeli government on August 7 to protest the disengagement plan. End Summary.

West Bank

2. (SBU) ATTACKS/SECURITY:

-- Injuries: The IDF shot and injured two Palestinians in Tulkarm August 6 during an incursion into the city, according to Palestinian security sources.

-- Injuries: Israeli settlers in Hebron beat and injured three Palestinians in the Hebron old city on August 6, according to Palestinian newspapers.

-- Injury: At Qalqiliya checkpoint August 6, IDF soldiers beat and lightly injured a Palestinian who witnesses said argued with the soldiers about being allowed through the checkpoint, according to Palestinian security sources.

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-- Arrests: The IDF arrested four Palestinians on security charges in Nablus August 6, according to PA security sources.

-- Arrests: The IDF arrested four Palestinians in Allar and Ein al-Bayda villages near Tulkarm on August 6, according to Palestinian newspapers.

-- Arrests: The IDF arrested 13 Palestinians in the Bethlehem area on security charges August 6, according to Palestinian security sources.

-- Arrest: Israeli police raided Hind al-Husseini college in East Jerusalem on August 6 and arrested DFLP political bureau member Ali Abu Hilal, who was taking part in a seminar at the college, according to school officials.

-- Arrest: Israeli police arrested Hamas political leader Hamid al-Bitawi in Jerusalem August 6 for being present in Jerusalem without a permit, but released him with a warning, according to Palestinian newspapers.

-- Arrest: The IDF arrested a Palestinian in Dura, near Hebron, on August 7 after discovering an air rifle and collection of knives near his residence, according to Palestinian newspapers.

-- Attack: Palestinian gunmen fired on two Israeli vehicles near Qalqiliya and Alfe Menashe settlement on August 7, but no injuries or serious damage resulted, according to Israeli radio.

3. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- Administrative Detentions: According to Israeli media, Defense Minister Mofaz ordered that three Kach activists, one reportedly an American citizen, be placed under administrative detention for two months during disengagement.

-- PA President Abbas instructed all Fatah Central Committee (FCC) members to remain in Gaza for the duration of Israel's pullout, and began political discussions to include work on setting a date for PLC elections.

-- PA Prime Minister Quraya and several other cabinet ministers were in Jenin August 8 to discuss Israel's pullout from the northern West Bank, according to Palestinian media.

Gaza

14. (SBU) ATTACKS/SECURITY:

-- Death/Shooting: Palestinian sources and UNRWA reported that one man was killed by IDF fire near an IDF outpost south of Rafah on August 7.

-- Injury/Shooting: Palestinian sources claimed that several civilians were injured when the IDF fired warning shots at a group approximately one kilometer outside of an IDF outpost near Rafah on August 6. UNRWA reported that one Palestinian male received gunshot wounds in the leg.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported five shooting incidents in addition to the two listed above in "death" and "injuries." On August 6 IDF troops came under fire on three occasions: once south of Rafah, once southeast of Neve Dekalim, and once east of El Murage. On August 7 IDF troops were targeted near an outpost south of Gush Katif and near an outpost west of Khan Yunis. Israeli media reported one additional incident near Netzarim.

-- Shootings/Intra-Palestinian: UNRWA reported that an armed dispute between Fatah members in the Jabalia camp started on August 4 and resumed on August 5-6 when mediators ended the fighting.

-- Mortars: The IDF reported three mortar shells fired over the weekend: one targeting civilians south of Dugit on August 5, one targeting IDF troops at an outpost northwest of Morag on August 7, and one targeting IDF troops three kilometers northeast of the Nachal Oz crossing on August 7.

-- Rockets: UNRWA reported that Palestinians fired two rockets at Gush Katif on August 7. According to the Israeli media, Palestinians fired one Qassam rocket at Sderot on August 8. UNRWA said the rocket was launched from an area east of Beit Lahia.

-- Explosive Devices: The IDF reported five explosive devices found and dismantled between August 5-8. On August 5 one device was located approximately one kilometer west of Gan Or. On August 6 Palestinian police found two devices: one south of Kissufim crossing and one near an IDF outpost south of Gush Katif. On August 7 Palestinian police located two additional devices: one two kilometers south of Kissufim crossing and one near Gush Katif.

-- Kidnappings: UNRWA reported that three of its staff (a British national, a Swiss national, and a Palestinian) were kidnapped by militants in Khan Yunis on August 8. All three were released unharmed later in the day and traveled to Gaza City. UNRWA has prohibited all movement by its non-Palestinian staff south of Gaza City until further notice.

-- Arrests/Civil Unrest: UNRWA reported that PA security forces arrested two members of Faruk Qaddumi's "popular army" in Khan Yunis on August 7. As a result, dozens of armed militants forced shops to close and occupied the Red Crescent building until PA officials and mediators convinced them to leave.

-- Demonstration: UNRWA reported that 4,000 Hamas supporters in the Jabalia camp protested against the killing of Israeli Arabs in Shfaram on August 6. UNRWA noted that masked and armed Hamas members participated in the demonstration and vowed to avenge the attack.

-- Protest: UNRWA reported that on August 6 Palestinians wounded during the Intifada erected a protest tent near the PLC building in Gaza City and demanded that the PA provide them with jobs.

-- Incursion: According to UNRWA, an IDF tank, bulldozer, and patrol entered the Palestinian village of Al Moghraga, near Netzarim, on August 6 and withdrew without incident after searching two houses.

-- Arrests: Israeli radio announced that police arrested nine Israelis (seven at the Kissufim Junction and two at Kfar Maimon) for smuggling right-wing activists into Gush Katif.

15. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS/INTERNAL CHECKPOINTS:

-- Erez crossing was open for Palestinians. On August 5, 923

workers and 185 Palestinian merchants used the crossing. On August 6, the numbers were 12 workers and 22 merchants. On August 7, the numbers were 1,1743 workers and 213 merchants. On August 8, the numbers were 386 workers and 245 merchants.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was closed for the weekend, but open on August 7, when 484 Palestinian workers were admitted, and on August 8, when 483 workers were admitted.

-- Rafah Terminal was open in both directions, but closed to Palestinian males between the ages of 16 and 35 on August 6. UNRWA reported that on August 7 the IDF allowed Palestinian males in this age group to cross provided they had coordinated their travel with Israeli authorities through PA officials.

-- The Karni terminal was partially open.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers but open for construction materials.

-- Netzarim Junction at Salahadeen Road was closed.

-- The Netzarim Coastal Road was open.

-- The Abu Houli internal crossing was open during most daylight hours. The Abu Houli-Gush Katif road was closed for part of August 7 due to a demonstration by settlers.

-- Salahadeen Road was open at Sufa/Morag.

-- The Abu Al-Ajeen bypass road was closed.

--- The Toufah checkpoint was closed on August 6 and has not been reopened.

16. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- The Israeli cabinet voted on August 7 to approve the first stage of the disengagement from Gaza and PM Sharon publicly reiterated that implementation would start on August 15 and "will be carried out in full."

-- Finance Minister Netanyahu resigned from the Government on August 7 and repeated his criticism of the disengagement plan (see septels from Embassy Tel Aviv).

-- The Israeli press announced that 1,000 of the 1,700 Israeli families affected by disengagement have filed compensation claims with the Disengagement Administration.

-- Arab media quoted Hamas leader Ismail Haniya as saying that the group will work with other factions and the PA during disengagement to "protect our national heritage and our legitimate rights to freedom, return and independence."
WALLES